

## Message Text

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ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS

UNCLAS STATE 305571

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING, DECEMBER 22, 1977

HODDING CARTER VOLUNTEERED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT ON THE  
INDIAN OCEAN TALKS:

RECENTLY, THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL NEWS STORIES SUGGESTING  
THAT THE U.S.-SOVIET TALKS ON INDIAN OCEAN ARMS LIMITATIONS  
HAVE HIT A SNAG AND THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE RAISED UNEXPECTED  
DIFFICULTIES. THESE REPORTS ARE INACCURATE. THE TALKS HAVE  
BEEN POSITIVE AND IN THE RECENT ROUND OF TALKS IN BERN, WE  
CONTINUED TO MAKE PROGRESS. NATURALLY, THERE REMAIN DIF-  
FERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES, BUT BOTH SIDES ARE MAKING  
EFFORTS TO NARROW THESE DIFFERENCES.

THAT'S THE END OF THE FORMAL STATEMENT.

QUESTIONS ON THAT?  
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Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIFICS AS TO WHICH OF THE MANY REPORTS  
YOU'RE REFERRING TO?

A: I'M NOT GOING TO DETAIL THEM. THERE HAVE BEEN A COUPLE.  
LET ME JUST SAY THAT I CAN'T GO INTO ALL THE DETAILS. I

WOULD SIMPLY SAY ON BACKGROUND, FOR INSTANCE, MURREY, THE SUGGESTION THAT THE SOVIETS ARE SEEKING THE EXCLUSION OF ALL NUCLEAR-POWERED SHIPS FROM THE AREA IS INCORRECT, AND I'M NOT GOING TO TRY TO GO DOWN THE WHOLE LIST OF THEM, BUT THAT PARTICULAR NOTION.

Q: CAN YOU TELL US WHAT THE DIFFERENCES REMAINING ARE?

A: NO, I CAN'T REALLY GO INTO THE SPECIFIC DIFFERENCES.

Q: ONE OF THE POINTS THAT WAS RAISED IN AN EDITORIAL THIS MORNING WAS THAT BECAUSE THE SOVIETS HAVE LOST THEIR BASE AT SOMALIA, THE SITUATION IS NOW UNEQUAL. IS THAT INCORRECT?

A: MURREY, WHILE IT'S CLEAR THAT ANY KIND OF CHANGE IN THE SITUATION WOULD IMPACT ON THE NEGOTIATIONS, THE FEELING OF THE NEGOTIATORS IS THAT THE RECENT EVENTS IN BERBERA HAVE NOT ADVERSELY AFFECTED THE COURSE OF THE TALKS.

Q: CAN YOU CONFIRM THAT THE BASIC NEGOTIATING POSTURE OF BOTH SIDES IS THAT THE PRESENT LEVELS WOULD BE MAINTAINED AND NOT EXCEEDED?

A: AS YOU UNDERSTAND, WHAT WE HAVE BEEN AIMING AT IS TO SEEK, FIRST, TO STABILIZE THE UNITED STATES AND SOVIET UNCLASSIFIED

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PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. ONCE THIS AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED, THE UNITED STATES IS PREPARED, FOLLOWING SUCH AN AGREEMENT, TO CONSIDER MUTUAL REDUCTIONS IN FORCES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. BUT THAT IS A SECOND STEP.

Q: WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO AGREEMENT YET ON THE STABILIZATION AT THE PRESENT LEVELS?

A: WE HAVE NOT COME TO AN AGREEMENT.

Q: HODDING, CAN YOU SAY IN WHICH AREAS THE DIFFERENCES WERE NARROWED BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES?

A: I'M NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO GO INTO THE SPECIFICS ON THAT, I'M SORRY.

Q: CAN YOU ANSWER THIS, THOUGH? IS THE DIFFICULTY IN DETERMINING WHAT IS ALREADY THERE NOW AND HOW TO EQUATE A LARGE SHIP WITH A SMALL SHIP, OR A SOVIET SHIP WITH A CLOSE PORT TO AN AMERICAN SHIP, IS THAT THE DIFFICULTY -- COUNTING?

A: I'M NOT PREPARED TO ENUMERATE WHAT THE DIFFICULTIES ARE.

I SIMPLY AM NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO COMMENT ON THAT ONE.

Q: HODDING, IF I CAN FOLLOW THAT UP, YOU'RE SEEKING STABILIZATION AS TO THE LEVEL, ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT THE NUMBER OF SHIPS --

A: WE'RE TALKING ABOUT OUR PRESENCE THERE, TO SEE THERE IS NO EXPANSION OF THE MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN.

Q: HODDING, DOES STABILIZATION IMPLY EQUALIZATION?

A: "STABILIZATION", AS I UNDERSTAND IT, MEANS RETENTION OF UNCLASSIFIED

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THE STATUS QUO.

Q: ETHIOPIAN RADIO SAYS THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS GRANTED ETHIOPIA 2 MILLION DOLLARS IN HUMANITARIAN AID. DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THAT?

A: YES, I HAVE SOMETHING ON THAT.

THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER FOR ETHIOPIAN RELIEF AND REHABILITATION, AND THE U.S. CHARGE, RICHARD MATHERON SIGNED AN AGREEMENT DECEMBER 21, YESTERDAY, UNDER WHICH THE UNITED STATES WILL PROVIDE 2 MILLION DOLLARS FOR A SPECIAL TRUST FUND WHICH THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT HAS ESTABLISHED FOR PROCUREMENT AND OPERATION OF AN EMERGENCY TRUCK FLEET FOR THE TRANSPORTATION OF FOOD AND RELIEF AID.

THIS DONATION WAS MADE IN RESPONSE TO AN APPEAL FROM THE U.N. DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM. AND THAT'S BASICALLY WHAT I DO HAVE, JIM.

Q: IS THAT PART OF A TOTAL U.S. AID PROGRAM, OR AN AID PROGRAM TO THE UNITED NATIONS -- OR WHAT?

A: I AM NOT SURE WHAT POCKET THIS COMES OUT OF, I WILL TAKE THAT QUESTION AND FIND OUT.

Q: WELL BASICALLY, MORE THAN THE POCKET, I AM INTERESTED IN THE ATTITUDE. ARE WE NOW SOFTENING WHAT HAS BEEN AN ALMOST IMPLACABLE OPPOSITION TO THE ETHIOPIAN REGIME?

A: FRANKLY, I WANT TO SAY SOMETHING FOR THE RECORD HERE: WE HAVE IN NO WAY SUGGESTED THAT WE ARE IN "IMPLACABLE" OPPOSITION TO THE ETHIOPIAN REGIME. WE ARE CERTAINLY NOT UNCLASSIFIED

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ATTEMPTING TO TAKE SIDES IN THAT REGION IN DISPUTES WHICH ARE GOING ON; AND WE HAVE CONTINUED AS YOU KNOW, A LEVEL OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE IN ETHIOPIA -- AND I DON'T HAVE THOSE FIGURES ANYMORE BUT WE HAVE RUN THEM OUT BEFORE.

WE HAVE REMAINED INTERESTED IN MAINTAINING A RELATIONSHIP WITH ETHIOPIA.

AS YOU KNOW, THERE IS AN ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR WHO HAS ARRIVED HERE AND WE ARE INTERESTED IN MAINTAINING THAT RELATIONSHIP.

Q: HODDING, IS THIS 2 MILLION DOLLARS -- IS THIS IN ADDITION TO SOME SUM THAT WAS ANNOUNCED BY AID THREE OR FOUR WEEKS AGO FOR THE PURCHASE OF TRUCKS DRIVEN INTO U.N. FLANK IN ETHIOPIA?

A: LET ME TAKE THAT ONE, BECAUSE I AM NOT SURE OF THE CONNECTION. VANCE

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## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** PFOR, PARM, US, UR, (CARTER, HODDING III)  
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